

Washington State Freight Mobility Plan – FAQ

March 2014

When will the Washington State Freight Mobility Plan be finished?

The Freight Plan is expected to be complete in the second quarter of 2014.

What is the purpose of the Washington State Freight Mobility Plan?

The primary purpose of this Plan is to guide capital and operating investments in the state freight system to ensure maximum benefit and efficient movement of goods. Through an overview of the essential role of freight to our economy, a discussion on the condition and performance of the State's transportation's assets and system, and a summary of the policies, strategies and institutions that support freight, this Plan will make a case for the importance of investing federal and state funds in freight priority projects and programs.

The Plan will help Washington successfully compete for federal freight funds by providing a data-driven benefit analysis supporting truck freight and intermodal freight projects that meet federal criteria and goals, and by integrating existing state modal plans into a single state freight plan to address all freight modes in the state system: truck, rail, waterway, and aviation.

What is the statutory basis for the Washington State Freight Mobility Plan?

State law (RCW 47.06.045) requires that “the state-interest component of the statewide multimodal transportation plan shall include a freight mobility plan which shall assess the transportation needs to ensure the safe, reliable, and efficient movement of goods within and through the state to ensure the state's economic vitality.” At the federal level, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) directs the U.S. Department of Transportation to encourage states to develop a freight plan.¹

This Plan was created to meet state and federal legal requirements; to align with the Legislature's six transportation policy goals: economic vitality, preservation, safety, mobility, environment, and stewardship outlined in RCW 47.04.280, with a significant focus on the newest goal, economic vitality; and to support freight-related strategies and recommended actions in the statewide, Washington Transportation Plan 2030. This Plan also complements WSDOT's statewide Rail Plan, Highway System Plan, and statewide Aviation System Plan by highlighting the essential role that these modes play in freight mobility.

Informed by research, analysis, and stakeholder input, this Plan will improve Washington's ability to achieve national freight goals:

- Improve the contribution of the freight transportation system to economic efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness
- Reduce congestion on the freight transportation system
- Improve the safety, security, and resilience of the freight transportation system
- Improve the state of good repair of the freight transportation system

¹ H.R. 4348, Section 1118 State freight plans, page 69. Available at:
<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-112hr4348enr/pdf/BILLS-112hr4348enr.pdf>

- Use advanced technology, performance management, innovation, competition, and accountability in operating and maintaining the freight transportation system
- Reduce adverse environmental and community impacts of the freight transportation system

How is the Washington State Freight Mobility Plan related to Washington State Rail Plan?

The Rail Plan addresses passenger and freight rail issues in Washington State and was published in the fourth quarter of 2013. The Freight Plan will address multimodal (road, rail, marine, air) freight issues and will draw on the findings of the freight rail sections of the Rail Plan. For more information: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Rail/staterailplan.htm>

How is the Washington State Freight Mobility Plan related to other WSDOT modal planning, such as the Washington Transportation Plan and the Highway System Plan?

The upcoming Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) is a multimodal plan incorporating freight, rail, highway, ferry, aviation, marine and river, public transportation, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian walkways. This plan will include recommendations from the Freight Plan.

The Highway System Plan will identify current and forecasted state highway needs and present strategies to address those needs. The Freight Plan will draw on the project lists and guidance developed as part of the Highway System Plan.

What is the role of the Washington State Freight Advisory Committee?

WSDOT and The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) have agreed that FMSIB is responsible for creating the Washington State Freight Advisory Committee as directed by Section 1117 in MAP-21, which recommends that the Advisory Committee include representatives from a cross-section of public and private sector freight stakeholders, including representatives of ports, shippers, carriers, freight-related associations, the freight industry workforce, the transportation department of the state, and local governments.

FMSIB will staff the Advisory Committee as a standing committee, as not all of these categories are represented by FMSIB's board, additional members have been added. The role of the Advisory Committee with the State Freight Mobility Plan is to confirm and validate deliverables of the Plan that WSDOT is responsible for developing.

What is the update schedule for the Washington State Freight Mobility Plan?

The project list will be updated approximately two years from the previous publication date. The full plan will be updated every five years.